



## Testing and Early Diagnosis

### What is Involved in Lung Cancer Screening?

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#### So what is involved in screening?

We talked a lot about the shared decision making, which I think is critical with any kind of screening test that's involved. What is a low dose CT scan? A low dose CT scan is a very low dose of radiation is given in this, and we'll talk a little bit more about that. What something that patients are worried about is: "Am I going to need an IV?", "Is there going to be contrast?", "My kidneys might not be healthy enough to get contrast dye". Fortunately, for a low dose CT scan, you do not need a contrast dye injected into your vein; which means you can get that without getting that contrast in your system. And based on what they find on the CT scan like we talked about, there is different grading that's assigned, and you might follow that up with another yearly CT scan, or by seeing a pulmonologist (who's a lung specialist), if they find a spot in the lung that needs a biopsy, and follow up.

#### Is it safe for me to get screening every year if I need it?

How much radiation exposure would I have? It's a very good question. According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a low dose CT scan provides what's called as 1.4 millisieverts or radiation. What does that mean? A regular CT scan — so if you were to get a full CT scan for any medical condition — that would be about 7 millisieverts. Again, what does that mean? The average background radiation a person might be exposed to in a year in the United States is about 3 to 5 millisieverts. If you are somebody who travels a lot for work, is taking a bunch of airplanes to go to different places, you might be getting exposed to 3 to 5 millisieverts. So, 1.4 millisieverts is significantly low compared to what you might be getting if you're taking 3 or 4 transatlantic flights a year. So to get a sense that this is not a very high dose of radiation you're getting in order to screen for something that's potentially a life-threatening illness; that is lung cancer.